

The Republican.

Theory and Method.

There is coming to be great danger, the *American Cultivator* thinks, that our farmers will be killed by theories. A great many writers for the agricultural press—some of the journals as well, it is feared—most of the so-called agricultural lecturers and speakers, and a large number of farmers themselves, are so completely filled with notions and theories, that they are never kept from doing the good they might do, and from becoming the successful, forehanded farmers they might become, if they would throw theories to the dogs. "Well," said a farmer, in conversation with a neighbor about his achievements, "I went into the field this morning, and I began to calculate and plan." "Yes," replied the one addressed, half interrupting him, "I went into the field and went to work." And if there were more who did the same, we should see smoother fields, better buildings on the farm, and more general thrift.

Now, theories are all very well, and a study of theories, where they are based upon and studied in connection with facts, may become of great service to the practical man. By this means real knowledge is advanced and the better performance of many useful matters is understood in a truer way.

But the pushing of theories to a useless extent, the crowding of particular hobbies upon the minds of farmers, till they are uncertain as to what to believe, or which course to adopt, or what to do, only leads to injury, disaster, and disgust. How many farmers have been discouraged at some plan, or experiment, or new way of doing a thing which they have tried, and which has only brought loss and disaster, because it was recommended by some presuming writer or lecturer, or based upon some theory which the party who recommended it thought to be a very important theory, sure to be correct and in practice to meet with uniform success. Turn your mind back over the last twenty years and see how many have been demolished by the test of experiment, and how many disappointed champions of such theories are forgotten. In those theories may have been some grains of truth, some elements of value; and in many of the theories now uppermost in the minds of the teachers of agriculture, as well as those which occupy the attention of thoughtful farmers, there are the principles not to be despised; but the great danger is that theory will take the place of method; that good practice will be sacrificed to ideas; that useless scheming and "calculation" will supercede work and tangible results. To a certain degree theories are well, but theories should never go before good practice. And American farmers, in their almost desire for novelty, and love of being thought learned and scientific, have allowed men who are not half as capable of instructing them in the management of their own farms as they are themselves, to lead them a harduant after some patty pot, which ends very likely, in the pocket of the "guide."

Now, when our farmers follow theory blindly, and base their farm operations upon formulas which relate to lots of other things than fertilization

take our word for it, they are on the wrong track. Good practice, in all our farm operations, should go first; and the great majority of our farmers are woefully deficient in good, thorough, profitable farm management, methods and practice. Improve the practice, and make the methods better, and let the theories take care of themselves, or follow afterwards, as they properly should. The farmer whose methods are first-class, whose practice is such that he receives a good income from it, can afford to give a little of his time to study theories; but till his methods of culture, of stock husbandry, of manuring, of fruit growing, of generalship, are perfect and at his fingers' ends, he will better let theory alone. The old writers on agriculture—the foundation authors about which our modern agricultural book-makers revel—in all their writings, put practice first and foremost, theory last. Modern teachers have reversed this order, forcing theory ahead, and neglecting practice and methods; and thousands of farmers are following or trying to follow some theory which they have had set up, when they should be at work improving the details of their practice, their farm management, that profitable crops and independence may follow.

America's Fifteen Inventions.

An English journal frankly gives credit to the American genius for at least fifteen inventions and discoveries, which it says have been adopted all over the world. These triumphs of American genius are thus enumerated: 1st, the cotton gin; 2d, the planing machine; 3d, the grass mower; 4th, the rotary printing press; 5th, navigation by steam; 6th, hot air, or caloric engine; 7th, the sewing machine; 8th, the India-rubber industry; 9th, the machine manufacture of horse shoes; 10th, the sand blast of carving; 11th, the gauge lathe; 12th, the grain elevator; 13th, artificial ice manufacture on a large scale; 14th, the electro magnet, and its practical application; 15th, the composing machine for printers. It is not often that American achievements in this direction receive due credit from such a source.—*New York Sun.*

Deeds always overbalance, and downright practice speaks more plainly than the fairest profession. The Rothschild who has just died is the one who is said to have a mortgag on Palestine for \$10,000,000.

The Eruption of Mount Etna.

There have been seventy-eight eruptions of the volcano Etna since the days of Pythagoras. The first recorded eruption occurred in the seventh century B. C. and eleven notable eruptions occurred between that date and the beginning of the Christian era. The most disastrous of the later eruptions were those of 1669, 1699, 1693, and 1852. In 1669 the city of Catania was destroyed by an earthquake incident to the eruption, and 15,000 lives were lost. In 1699 the lava destroyed twenty towns and villages, and flowed in a stream from two to three miles wide until it poured into the sea. Reaching the walls of Catania, one stream of lava poured over the wall, sixty feet high, into the city a fiery cascade of destruction. When the main current reached the sea the stream of lava was 600 yards broad and forty feet deep. The country for sixty miles around was covered with sand and ashes from the craters.

In 1691 fifty cities and towns were destroyed, and nearly 100,000 people lost their lives. The last eruption occurred in 1855, when seven new craters were formed on the northeast side of the mountain. The present eruption has been signalized by the opening of three new craters on the northern slope, and streams of lava are flowing down the western slope.

The volcano, situated on the eastern seaboard of Sicily, has a circumference of ninety-one miles at the base, and covers an area of 480 square miles. There are on the mountain two cities and sixty-three towns and villages, and the population of the fertile districts is about 300,000. The cultivated region is about two miles wide on the north, east, and west, and nine or ten miles wide on the south. The main or great crater in the center is 10,867 above the level of the sea, but there have been hundreds of other openings within a radius of ten miles.

In 1669 the lava flowed down the southern slope, or through the most populous valleys. The movement was rapid at first, but as the lava gradually cooled the progress was very slow. In twenty days the current moved thirteen miles. During the last twenty-three days of its course it moved only two miles. Many of the lava currents cool without doing any damage, or before they reach the cultivated districts. In the eruption now in progress, the new craters are near Banda, or near the foot of the mountains on the northern slope. The lava current is reported as less than 100 yards wide, and has moved a distance of about four miles. Messina, which, it is stated, has suffered from showers of cinders, is forty-five miles northeast of Mount Etna. As many of the eruptions have extended over a period of several months, the outburst mentioned in the dispatches may be the beginning of a disastrous, or, like the eruption of 1855, it may result in comparatively little damage. Later dispatches will probably indicate more satisfactorily the course of the lava stream. The principal towns of the northwestern slope are Bronte, Maletto, and Randazzo.

Various Renderings of a Classic Ballad.
The following is the Chinese version of Mary and the lamb:

"We gal named Moll and lamb,
For a walk we'll go,
Eve will be home long to."

We heard a son of Erin, says the Count Bluff (la) *Globe*, trying to surround Mary and her lamb the other day, and this is the way he understood it:

"Begor, Mary had a little lamb,
And the wool was white entirely,
An' wh-never Mary would stir her stumps,
The young shape would follow her completely."

The story as told by a sophomore to his little sister: Mary was the proprietress of a diminutive, incipient sheep, whose outer covering was as devoid of color as congealed atmospheric vapor, and to all localities to which Mary perambulated her young sownthow was morally sure to follow. It tagged her to the dispensary of learning one diurnal section of time, which was contrary to all precedent, and excited consternation of the seminary attendants when they perceived the presence of a young matron at the establishment of instruction. Consequently, the preceptor expelled her from the interior, but he remained in the neighborhood without fretfulness until Mary once more became visible. "What caused this specimen of the genus ovis to bestow so much affection on Mary?" the inquisitive progeny vociferated. "Because Mary reciprocated the wool-producer's esteem, you understand," the tutor answered back.

Weights and Measures.

All families are not supplied with scales and weights, and, therefore, the measures given below will be found convenient.

About sixty drops of any thin liquid will fill a common-sized teaspoon.

Four teaspoonsfuls or half a gill, will fill a common-sized wine glass.

Four wine-glasses will fill a half-pint measure, a common tumbler, or a large coffee-cup.

Ten eggs usually weigh one pound before they are broken. Eight large ones will weigh a pound.

One pint of water or milk will weigh one pound.

One pint of molasses will weigh one and one-quarter pounds.

Three table-spoonfuls of baking powder should weigh one ounce.

One quart of flour weighs one pound.

One quart of Indian meal weighs one and one-quarter pounds.

Important Tax Decision.

The attorney general decides that

obligations payable in merchandise and used for circulation come so evidently within the mischief intended to be remedied by the act of February 8, 1875, as to subject them to a tax of ten per cent.

The act provides that every person, firm, association and every corporation, state bank or state banking association shall pay a tax of ten per centum on the amount of their own notes used for circulation and paid out by them.

My Mother-in-law is a walking advertisement for Dr. Bull's Baby Syrup," a subscriber remarked yesterday; "she recommends it everywhere."

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out a ward caucus an' deliberates in a collar box. It applies to men who buys up delegates an' depends on honest voters to push him forward. It applies to chaps who sail along a river with a load of ideals in their heads that all business would suddenly stop in case death took him away."

Old Summer Probabilities.

Burlington Hawkeye.

Starlight and silence. Comparative silence. No sound disturbed the quiet of the long thoroughfare of Jefferson street save the conversation of people as they tramped back and forth, the ringing of the engine bells, and the ceaseless shriek of steam whistles, the rumbling of the street cars, and the rattling of wagons on the uneven street, and the howls of boys, and the tireless clack-clack of an auctioneer or two, and an Italian boy on the corner, and a man playing the trombone up in a third story room, and a boy beating a drum in the backyard, and a baby in the next house, uncertain whether to go to sleep or stay awake and have the colic, and a man falling down a flight of stairs, and somebody making an open-air temp race speech on the corner.

All else was silence. Silence how deep—

Quarter less twain.

And darkness how profound.

Down the street they walked; walked in the busy crowd, and, yet again, for each to the other was all, or, all to the other was each.

At any rate they liked each other. Kind of.

"Leander," she said, and there was a tremulous intonation in the tender voice, "the summer, the long bright summer days and the starry summer nights, filled with the voiceless glory of their love-lit beauty, will soon be here."

"Hero," he made her answer, "they are here now. Did you read in the *Hawkeye* last Sunday morning, love, of the five young people who died so recently, and in such a heart-rending manner; poisoned by vanilla flavoring, love. M. Scherwinger-Hecht-leichtweiss, who has investigated the subject very thoroughly, says the natives of South America poison the vanilla beans for the purpose of increasing the strength and delicacy of their peculiar flavoring. It is terrible, love. I tremble when I think how many times and how narrowly we escaped death last summer."

Hero shuddered and clung more closely to his arm, but she said nothing, and Leander went on: "And Prof. Doremus says the flavoring extract of the lemon is almost identical with the active principle of yellow fever, and he thinks the Government ought to prohibit its manufacture and use. But I will stand between you and danger, my own, with my very life."

"It is too good of you, Leander," she said, cheerfully, "I am not worthy of such devotion. But do not grieve for me, dear, for they have a new flavoring for ice cream this year—I saw it advertised yesterday—that is not only harmless, but healthful, and far more pleasant than these old and dangerous flavorings. Do not weep, dear," she continued, as Leander caught his breath and shuddered.

"For we can have all the ice-cream we want this summer, and still be happy."

And Leander? Oh yes, he did not say anything, but he looked as though he thought they might be happy. Oh, yes, very, very happy. Most everlasting, he seemed to think. Too happy, oh, too, too happy. He could not speak. He could only gasp, and feel his pockets and sigh and kind of choke up and gaze down toward the river and look, oh, so mighty blamed happy. Oh, yes.

Fat People.

Corpulent people can be reduced from two to five pounds per week without starvation, by using Allian's Anti-Fat, a purely vegetable, and perfectly harmless remedy. It acts upon the bowels, and expels the accumulated fat from the system, without any harm to the body, but not in time in that simple, pure remedy. Hop Bitters; for we can have all the ice-cream we want this summer, and still be happy."

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An act requiring the destruction of cockle burs was passed by the general assembly of Illinois.

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